

## **LEVELS OF SATISFACTION AMONG THE FOREIGN TOURISTS IN ETHIOPIA: IN THE CASE OF GONDAR HERITAGE TOURIST CENTER, AMHARA REGION, ETHIOPIA**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Ethiopia is one of the African countries that possess the highest number of United Nations Education, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites in Africa and Gondar is the historical city that registered on UNESCO World heritage sites. where tourist satisfaction varies from one region to another. The main objective of the study was to measure the elements satisfaction levels among the foreign tourists of Gondar. The primary data collected through questionnaire. So, 160 questionnaires have been prepared and distributed. Secondary data was also used in this study through reviewed books, magazines, brochures and web pages for the use of tourist's satisfaction levels. The purposive, convenient sampling was applied on those tourists visiting historic city of Gondar. The result showed that their origins or place of residence in terms of Continent 83.33% of respondents came from Europe and 16.67% were from Asia. Regarding enjoyment level, the majority of respondents (50%) agreed with their level of enjoyment and about 16.67% were strongly agreed with their enjoyment. This indicates that, most of the tourists who were visiting the Gondar were enjoyed with their visit. Regarding the satisfaction with the decision to visit the country 16.67% of the respondents disagreed and about 16.67% were undecided with their satisfaction level. About 58.33% and 8.33% of the respondents were agreed and strongly agreed with the satisfaction level from their visit respectively. Regarding degree of knowledge of foreign languages from the service personnel and convenience and access to local transport, the majority of respondents rate these as bad and very bad. These indicated that, in Gondar city the service personnel and access to local transport to destinations are not developed. In order to increase the satisfaction levels for tourists visiting Gondar different stakeholders should work cooperatively so as train the service personnel in the area of tourism and hospitality.

**KEY WORDS:** Tourist, Satisfaction level, Gondar, Ethiopia.

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### **INTRODUCTION:**

Ethiopia is one of the African countries that possess the highest number of United Nations Education, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites in Africa, with nine sites spread throughout the whole country, four important National Parks, a source of the world's longest river, and sites revered among adherents to Christianity, Islam and Judaism and diverse African traditional societies. Ethiopia has very distinct cultural and historic products

based on ancient Axumite civilizations and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Rockhewn churches of Lalibela and the walled Old City of Harar with its seven gates considered as the fourth holiest city in Islam, as a cradle of civilization, with fossilized evidence of the ancestors of homo sapiens as old as 4.4 million years B.C., and the much more famous Dinknesh, or Lucy.

Ethiopia located in the East of Africa is one of the planets earliest formed. With much volcanic activity prevailing for millions of years, Ethiopia has outstanding physical features- high mountain ranges and plateau, lowlands, deep gorges and wide valley, lush meadows, long rivers, lakes, arid land and parched deserts and year round agreeable climate tropical sun and alpine cool climate all existing in a territory that is about 1,194,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Associated with the various physical features of the land is the richest of its bio-diversity, placing it among the foremost in the world and accounting for unique spectacular landmass and its numerous endemic animals and plants. (Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Culture & Tourism, 2006).

Ethiopia is quite literally a mine for hominid and other fossils and with good justification it has been called the origin and cradle of human kind. This paper attempts to explore and compare the attributes of both cultural and historical sites and events as well as natural attractions from a cognitive perspective through understanding what are the affective outcomes (satisfaction) of tourists' travel experience, why tourists chose the attraction (motivation), what cognitive outcomes tourists get from their experience (perceived benefits), who are these tourists (socio-demographics), and what are their travel characteristics (travel pattern).

In line with this the town of Gondar, which is found in Northern Ethiopia, has won the prestigious status of a classified UNESCO world heritage site, in 26 October 1979, mainly because in it stands the castle compound locally known as the Atsie Fasil Ghimb. This palace compound encapsulates much of the country's political and religious history between the mid-seventeenth century and the mid-nineteenth century, when Gondar was the capital of the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia. (Manuel Joao Ramos & Fasil Ayehu: 2002).

The present study is conducted to analyze the elements satisfaction level among the foreign tourists.

## **METHODS AND MATERIALS:**

This paper attempts to explore and compare the attributes of both cultural sites and natural attractions from a cognitive perspective through understanding what are the affective outcomes (satisfaction) of tourists' travel experience, why tourists chose the attraction (motivation), what cognitive outcomes tourists get from their experience (perceived benefits), who are these tourists (socio-demographics), and what are their travel characteristics (travel pattern). these are influenced by environment, infrastructure/accessibility the local food quality etc.

Travel is to discover, learn about new and strange something's or save/ remember beautiful scenery of natural. Each destination/area had their own strange beauty. For example, travelers from Northern regions and climates tend to spend a proportion of their annual holiday in the South where they can enjoy sunshine as well as sea sports. (Buhalis, 2000). Ethiopia has advantage about location, landscape, climate, cultural diversity and so on. All of them are created Ethiopia has more ability to develop diverse forms of tourism.

Infrastructure, mean those tools which are fairly transparent for most people we know about, wide in both temporal and scope, embedded in familiar structures – like power grids, water, the Internet, airlines. (Yates & Maanen, 2001, pp 305-306).

Accessibility may be defined as the easy-to-reach desired destinations by means of a specific transport system. Accessibility is of great importance both from the point of view of regional development and that of social welfare. It depends to a great extent on the building of transport infrastructures and in turn influences land use and mobility. (Gutierrez, 1987).

Tourists drawn to a process orientation would enjoy meeting local artisans, hearing their stories, watching craft demonstrations, and learning about the cultural and historical significance for a craft in its local context. (Yu & Littrell, 2003). One of the aspects that are attracting increasing attention is the motivation of visitors to attend special events (Formica & Murrmann, 1998). People also travelled to cities on pilgrimage for religious purposes, as this is where all major cathedrals, mosques and temples were usually located. (Buhalis, 2000).

Hudman suggested food has become an increasingly important element in the tourist industry and up to 25% of total tourist expenditure is accounted for by foods and this number is even much higher (Hudman, 1986). Food has been regarded as not only being a basic necessity for tourist consumption but also an essential element of regional culture (Jones & Jenkins, 2002). Different kinds of food are the main purpose for tourists to travel. Food can at least provide extra opportunities for tourists to be in a more memorable and enjoyable holiday atmosphere than they expected.

## **METHODS:**

Diverse geographic locations and sites with high enough visitation are available in Ethiopia. Hence the cross-sectional research design used to conduct the study. Tourists who have a plan to visit one site have the chance to visiting at least the main tourist destinations in the country. From these main tourist destinations, the historic route is the major tourist destination site including Lalibela, Gondar and Aksum. Apart from these major tourist destinations there are also other destinations in all directions of the country. The researcher by considering this situation the purposive, convenient sampling was applied on those tourists visiting historic city of Gondar. So, the researcher considered to gather adequate information by distributing questioner for foreign tourists. The researcher selected their target sample size by assuming that the visitors are random from different countries hence based on convenient sampling the target sample size was 160 from all foreign tourists who visited in peak season of 2014-15 (November to February) of Gondar Town. The sampling activity was carried out near three major sites of the Gondar i.e Fasil gumb,Fasil bath and Kuskom and 60,50 and 50 samples in respective sites.

## **The Data collection process:**

The research was done based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data collected through questionnaire. So, 160 questionnaires have been prepared and distributed but the researchers able to get back those properly filled questionnaires only by 120 foreign tourists at the time of collection. Secondary data was also used in this study through reviewed books, magazines, brochures and web pages for the use of tourist's satisfaction levels while they are visiting the city.

The questionnaire included several sections. The first section included questions about socio-demographic information of respondents. The second section asked respondents about their perceptions and travel patterns during their trip in Ethiopia, Gondar. To measure satisfaction, three items were used including tourists' general satisfaction and satisfaction with the variety/quality of cultural, natural, historic and heritage attractions in Ethiopia, Gondar. These items were measured on a Likert scale (1=not satisfied to 5= extremely satisfied). Motivation was measured by asking how important was each reason to the decision to travel to Ethiopia (1=not important to 5= extremely important). Different motives, which refer to aspects of nature, culture, physical activity, environment, relaxation, escape, and enjoyment, were included.

The data collected from the foreign tourists analyzed using simple statistical techniques like standard deviation, mean, and percentile.

### Results and discussion:

**Table: 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents:**

Variables	Characteristics categories	Sampled foreign visitors(120)	
		Number	Percentage
Sex	Male	70	58.34
	Female	50	41.67
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
Marital status	Single	30	25
	Married	90	75
	Divorced	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
Educational level	Lower education	0	0
	High school	0	0
	Collage	20	16.67
	University degree	70	58.33
	Post Graduate	30	25
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
Place of residence (Content)	N. America	12	10
	S. America	0	0
	Europe	90	73.33
	Australia	0	0
	Africa(excluding Ethiopia)	0	0
	Asia	20	16.67
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field survey (2014)

Table 1 shows that, among the respondents, 58.34% were Male and 41.67% were female and from these participants 25% were single, 75% were married and 0% were divorced.

Regarding their educational level all respondents have college level education and above i.e. 16.67% have college level education, 58.33% have university degree and 25% have post graduate level. Regarding their origins or place of residence in terms of Continent 73.33% of respondents or tourists came from Europe and 16.67% are from Asia and 10% from North America.

Generally, the result showed that, the majority of tourists in Gondar were male and most of them were married as well as having educational status of University degree and also they were from the content of Europe.

### Factors that Influences the Decision to Visit this area:

**Table 2. Factors of influence to visit**

Factors	Very important	important	Not very important	Not important at all
Good weather conditions	20 16.67%	60 50%	40 33.33%	0 0%
Quality of natural scenery & landscapes/environment	30 25%	60 50%	30 25%	0 0%
Desire to learn about other cultures, their ways of life & heritage	80 66.67%	20 16.67%	20 16.67%	0 0%
Participation in major cultural or religious events	80 66.67%	20 16.67%	20 16.67%	0 0%
Accessibility	40 33.33%	30 25%	20 16.67%	30 25%
Safety	10 8.33%	70 58.33%	30 25%	10 8.33%

**Source:** Field survey (2014)

Table 2 shows different factors that influence the decision to visit an area and under these factors there are four major measurement criteria's ranging from very important to not important at all. Regarding good weather condition, 16.67% of tourists fill the questioner as very important factor to visit the area, while the majority of the tourist's i.e about 50% responded as important factor for their visit. On the other side, 33.33% of visitors rate good weather condition as not very important factor for their visit. Generally this indicates that most of the visitors in Gondar considered good weather condition as the main factor for their decision to visit.

Another factor which is considered in the questioner is quality of natural scenery & landscapes/environment. 25% said it is very important and 25% said it is not very important factor for the decision to visit. 50% Of the respondents considered it as important factor for their

decision to visit. So the researchers can conclude that quality of natural scenery & landscapes/environment is the main factor for tourist's decision to visit the city. Desire to learn about other cultures, their ways of life & heritage is also another important factor for the decision to visit the city. Regarding this factor the majority of the respondents (66.67%) rate it as very important factors for visiting Gondar city, while respondents with equal weight (16.67% each) rate it as important and not very important factor for their decision to come. Surprisingly, Participation in major cultural or religious events is also considered as the factor for decision to visit and under this respondents filled the questioner with equal weight with that of the previous factor (Desire to learn about other cultures, their ways of life & heritage). Generally, the researchers conclude that, Desire to learn about other cultures, their ways of life & heritage as well as Participation in major cultural or religious events are the major factors that influence the decision to come to Ethiopia and Gondar city in particular.

Other factors that are considered were accessibility and safety issues. Accessibility was the very important factor to come in to Ethiopia by the majority of respondents and safety was also considered by them as important factor.

**Table: 3. Status of Products, Services and Hospitality in Ethiopia – Gondar:**

<b>Products, Services &amp; Hospitality</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Bad</b>	<b>Very bad</b>
Friendliness of the people and Explanation and convenience of the customs	70 58.33%	50 41.67%	0 0%	0 0%
National cuisine/drinks	40 33.33%	70 58.33%	10 8.33%	0 0%
Accessibility to cultural heritage sites and Interpretation of cultural heritage sites	30 25%	30 25%	50 41.67%	10 8.33%
Access to wildlife/plant life viewing and Interpretation of wildlife/plant life	20 16.67%	30 25%	70 58.33%	0 0%
Degree of knowledge of foreign languages from the service personnel	10 8.33%	40 33.33%	40 33.33%	30 25%
Convenience and access to local transport	20 16.67%	30 25%	60 50%	10 8.33%

**Source:** Field survey (2014)

The above table revealed that the status of products, services and hospitality in the city. under these part different criteria's were put and evaluated by tourists. The first and foremost criteria were friendliness of the people and explanation and convenience of the customs. The majority of the respondents (58.33% and 41.67%) rated these criteria as excellent and good respectively. This indicated that the hospitality nature of the people and the explanation and convenience the customs were good for tourists who visit Gondar. Regarding the national

cuisine/drinks, 33.33%, 58.33% and 8.33% of respondents rate it as excellent, good and bad respectively. This also indicated that the majority of tourists in Gondar were convenient to the national cousin and drinks.

In terms of accessibility to cultural heritage sites and interpretation of cultural heritage sites 25%, 25%, 41.67% and 8.33% of respondents rated it by saying excellent, good, bad and very bad respectively. As indicated from the percentage the issue of accessibility and interpretation of cultural sites are in the bad condition. Regarding access to wildlife/plant life viewing and interpretation of wildlife/plant life similar problem is visible from the percentage.16.67%, 25, and 58.33% of respondents rate this as excellent, good and bad respectively.

Regarding degree of knowledge of foreign languages from the service personnel and convenience and access to local transport, the majority of respondents rate these as bad and very bad. These indicated that, in Gondar city the service personnel and access to local transport to destinations are not developed.

**Table: 4 Evaluation of satisfaction Levels:**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
I really enjoyed the visit	0	10	30	60	2
	0%	8.33%	25%	50%	16.67%
I am satisfied with my decision to visit	0	20	20	70	10
	0%	16.67%	16.67%	58.33%	8.33%
I have positive feelings regarding	0	0	0	70	50
	0%	0%	0%	58.33%	41.67%
This experience is exactly what I need	50	10	0	30	30
	41.67%	8.33%	0%	25%	25%
This visit was better than expected	10	20	20	40	30
	8.33%	16.67%	16.67%	33.33%	25%

**Source:** Field survey (2014)

#### **Evaluation of tourist satisfaction levels in Gondar city:**

Table 4 indicates the evaluation criteria's of tourist satisfaction levels and in each criteria there were different rating techniques ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The first criteria to measure this were their enjoyment level of visiting Ethiopia and Gondar city. Regarding these, the majority of respondents (50%) agreed with their level of enjoyment and about 16.67% were strongly agreed with their level of enjoyment. This indicates that, most of the tourists who were visiting the Gondar were enjoyed with their visit. Regarding the satisfaction with the decision to visit the country 16.67% of the respondents disagreed and about 16.67% were undecided with their satisfaction level. About 58.33% and 8.33% of the respondents were agreed and strongly agreed with the satisfaction level from their visit respectively. As indicated

from the above result, one can say the majority of tourists in Gondar were satisfied by their decision to visit Gondar and also all of respondents have positive feelings regarding the country and the city as well. But for most of the respondents the experience was not exactly similar with their prior expectation. Even if the experience is not exactly similar with their prior expectation, their visit was better than expected.

**Table: 5 Evaluation of Intentional loyalty**

	Strongly disagree	disagree	undecided	agree	Strongly agree
I will visit Ethiopia and Gondar again in the future	20 16.67%	20 16.67%	20 16.67%	40 33.33%	20 16.67%
I would recommend Ethiopia and Gondar to others	30 25%	40 33.33%	0 0%	20 16.67%	20 16.67%
I speak positive about Ethiopia and Gondar to others	10 8.33%	20 16.67%	0 0%	60 50%	30 25%

**Source:** Field survey (2014)

### **Evaluation of international loyalty among respondents:**

Table 5 indicates the evaluation of international loyalty of tourists and in each criterion there were different rating techniques ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. As one understands from table 5, the majority of the respondents (50%) will visit Ethiopia and Gondar city in particular again in the future but 16.67% are undecided yet. About 33.33% of respondents responded that they will never come to Gondar for the future. Regarding recommendation to others the majority 58.33% of the respondents responded that they will never recommend to others and few (33.33%) decided that they will recommend others to visit Gondar city. But the majority (75%) of tourists responded that they will speak positive about Ethiopia and Gondar city to others, the rest 25% said that they will never speak positive about Ethiopia and Gondar to others. Generally, the researchers from this result can conclude that, most tourists who were visiting the country and the city have positive images about the country and Gondar city, and they will come again to visit it but, they will never recommend for others.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **Conclusion:**

The findings of this study on measuring the elements satisfaction levels among the foreign tourists in Ethiopia, Gondar indicates that, the majority of tourists in the city of Gondar were male and most of them were married as well as having educational status of University degree and also they were from the content of Europe demographically. The findings also assures that, desire to learn about other cultures, their ways of life & heritage as well as the desire to participation in major cultural or religious events were the very important factors that influence the decision to travel to Gondar. Regarding the status of products, services and hospitality in Gondar the findings showed that the service personnel and access to local transport to destinations are not well developed while friendliness of the people and explanation and



convenience of the customs as well as national cousin and drinks were convenient for tourists. But, Accessibility to cultural heritage sites and Interpretation of cultural heritage sites as well as access to wildlife/plant life viewing and interpretation of wildlife/plant life is not that much developed in the city. The majority of tourists in Gondar city were satisfied by their decision to visit the city and also all of had positive feelings regarding the City. But for most of the tourists experience was not exactly similar with their prior expectation. Generally, most tourists who were visiting the city had positive images about the city and they are expecting to come again to visit it but they will never recommend for others.

### **Recommendation :**

Based on the findings of the study the following general recommendations were drawn to measure the elements satisfaction levels among the foreign tourists in Gondar.

In order to increase the satisfaction levels for tourists visiting Gondar different stakeholders should work cooperatively so as train the service personnel in the area of tourism and hospitality particular to promote site specific cultures..

Accessibility to cultural heritage sites and Interpretation of cultural heritage sites as well as access to wildlife/plant life viewing and interpretation of wildlife/plant life is not that much developed in the country. So, concerned stake holders including the government of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) should do on the area of this to make each and every tourist attraction accessible for tourists.

Majority of tourists have positive image about the country and the Gondar city after visiting but they never recommend for other tourists to come to Ethiopia. So, concerned bodies should asses the major hindrances why tourists didn't recommend and forward positive outcomes.

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